



Labrador
Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat
Executive Council
Activity Report 2010-11



Message from the Chair

As Chairpersons for the Labrador Regional Council, we hereby submit the annual activity report for the 2010-11 fiscal year. On behalf of the council and in accordance with the *Transparency and Accountability Act*, please accept our signatures as indicative of the council's accountability for our achievements as reported here.

During the past three year planning cycle, the council has focused on health, transportation and energy issues. Now that the 2008-11 activity planning is completed we are clueing up work on the three priority areas. In 2010-11 we continued with 2009-10 commitments and are now finishing up our health related research.

Over the past year we have met several times to begin exploring new directions and tackle new initiatives in our region. We continue to support government in moving forward on issues that affect Labrador. We see much change coming in the near future with Lower Churchill and the south coast road being open. There are exciting new opportunities on the horizon.

In the future we hope to continue our dialogue with government and community. As we face the challenges ahead, we are encouraged to see progress in our regions. As a council we wish to continue engaging community and providing policy advice to the Provincial Government to the benefit of all.

Sincerely,



and

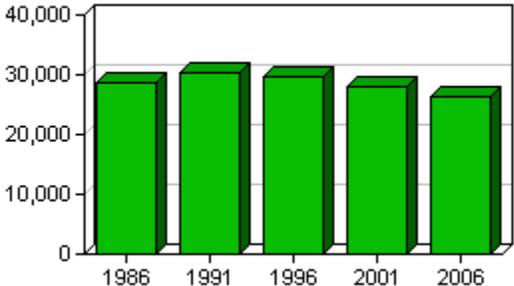
Lori O'Brien and Jim Farrell
Co-Chairs
Labrador Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat

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1. Overview of the Region

Population



The 2006 Census population for Labrador Rural Secretariat Region was 26,395. This represents a decline of 5.3% since 2001. Over the same period, the entire province experienced a population decline of 1.5% since 2001 (505,470 in 2006, down from 512,930).

The 2006 income for every man, woman, and child (personal income per capita) in Labrador Rural Secretariat Region was \$27,400. For the province, personal income per capita was \$22,900. After tax personal income per capita, adjusted for inflation,

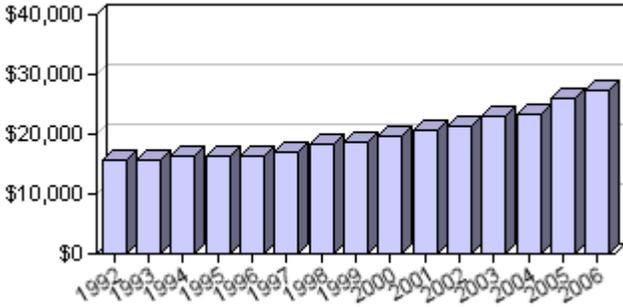
was \$17,400 for Labrador Rural Secretariat Region in 2006. For the province it was \$14,900.

Half of the couple families in Labrador Rural Secretariat Region had incomes of more than \$80,200 in 2006. Half of the couple families in the province had incomes of more than \$56,500.

Half of the lone-parent families in Labrador Rural Secretariat Region had incomes of less than \$26,300 in 2006. Half of the lone-parent families in the province had incomes of less than \$25,300.

The 2006 self-reliance ratio for Labrador Rural Secretariat Region was 87.7%. This is a measure of the community's dependency on government transfers such as: Canada Pension, Old Age Security, Employment Insurance, Income Support Assistance, etc. The higher the percentage of income that comes from transfers the lower the self-reliance ratio. The provincial self-reliance ratio for 2006 was 78.5%.

Personal Income Per Capita



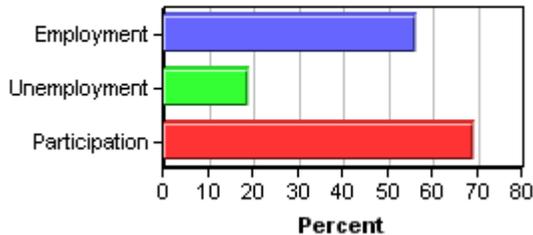
According to the 2006 Census, in Labrador Rural Secretariat Region 69.6% of homes were owned versus rented compared to 78.7% for the province and 68.4% for Canada.

The unemployment rate for May 2006 for people aged 15 and older was 18.5%. The provincial unemployment rate was 18.6%.

The employment rate for the entire year 2005 for those aged 15 and older was 76.9%. The provincial employment rate for the same period was 63.3%.

The number of individuals in Labrador Rural Secretariat Region who received Income Support Assistance at some point in the year 2008 was 1,845. The 1991 figure was 4,695.

**Labour Market Rates
Population 15 and Older
(May 2006)**



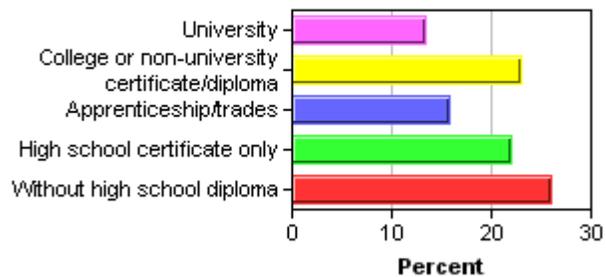
The total number of children ages 0 to 17 in Labrador Rural Secretariat Region who were in families on Income Support Assistance in 2008 was 610. The figure for 1991 was 2,085.

Census 2006 reported 26.0% of people 18 to 64 years of age in Labrador Rural Secretariat Region do not have a high school diploma compared to 25.1% of people in the entire province.

In Labrador Rural Secretariat Region about 11.2% of people aged 25 to 54 had a Bachelor's Degree or higher in 2006 compared to 15.1% in the province as a whole.

In 2006, in Labrador Rural Secretariat Region, 82.7% of people 25 to 34 years of age had at least a high school diploma. This compares to 85.4% in the entire province and 89.1% for Canada.

Highest Level of Education, Pop 18 to 64



A major indicator of well-being is how a person rates their own health status. In 2007-2008, 16.2% (+/- 3.3%) of individuals age 12 and over in Labrador Rural Secretariat Region rated their health status as excellent

and 45.5% (+/- 4.5%) of individuals age 12 and over in Labrador Rural Secretariat Region rated their health status as very good. For the province, 18.1% (+/- 1.2%) of individuals age 12 and over rated their health status as excellent; 43.7% (+/- 1.5%) rated their health status as very good.

In 2005, for Canada, 60.2% of individuals age 12 and over rated their health status as very good to excellent.

Additional information, including gender-specific information and information for other levels of geography, can be found at www.communityaccounts.ca and www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural.

2. Regional Council Overview

The Labrador Regional Council is comprised of seven members; five female and two male. The council currently has representation from larger and smaller communities throughout the region, including four members from communities of less than 5,000 people.

The council does not have a budget and, as such, an audited financial statement is not required in this report. Meetings of the council and associated costs are funded through the budget of the Rural Secretariat.

The Rural Secretariat also funds a regional planner position in the region, who among other duties, act as an information resource for the council and facilitates the work of the council. The planner for the Labrador region is Lisa Densmore. Her office is located in the office of the Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development at Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

| Regional Council members | Community |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Carol Burden | Port Hope Simpson |
| Cora Edmunds | Postville |
| Jim Farrell | Wabush |
| Jonathan Jesseau | Labrador City |
| Lori O'Brien | L'Anse Au Loup |
| Patsy Ralph | Labrador City |
| Molly Shiwak | Nain |

* For an updated listing of council members please visit <http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/regionalmem.asp> .

3. Mandate

The Regional Council's mandate is to:

- To develop a common, evidence-based understanding of the social, economic, environmental and cultural realities facing a region.
- To review key economic and social measures (e.g. education levels, demographic trends, health status, income levels, EI usage, economic diversity, etc) and to reach agreement on the priorities for change over the next five years.
- To identify policies and programs which either a) advance b) negatively impact or c) need to be developed to encourage the necessary change over the five-year period.
- To advance regional cooperation through the sharing of information on and discussion about the economic and social measures, and to encourage regional partners to take action on and be accountable for those areas within their mandates.
- To serve as a sounding board in their region for new or proposed initiatives.
- To select an individual to represent the Region on the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat.

4. Lines of Business

The council supports the Rural Secretariat's four lines of business:

Citizen-based policy advice: The Rural Secretariat supports nine citizen-based Regional Councils, and one stakeholder-based Provincial Council, to develop policy and decision-making advice for submission to government. Typically, councils, with the support of Rural Secretariat staff, hold public engagement sessions involving citizens and/or stakeholder group representatives, and conduct community-based research activities, to inform the development of advice documents.

Collaboration: The Rural Secretariat understands that sustainability in rural Newfoundland and Labrador can be significantly advanced through more and better collaboration between and among rural stakeholders including governments. Sometimes the Rural Secretariat works to support existing rural collaborative processes such as partnerships. Other times they work to help convene new regional collaborative processes such as networks or alliances. The broad goal is to help build a strengthened 'culture of collaboration' in rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

Research: The Rural Secretariat collaborates with provincial partners on a number of formal research endeavors that help to improve understanding of the challenges facing, and opportunities available to, rural regions of this province. The Rural Secretariat also works directly with regional partners and councils on a host of community-based research initiatives – small regional-level data-gathering efforts that give those involved the information and knowledge they need to effectively advise the Provincial Government on regional and rural policy issues.

Public dialogue and engagement: In addition to supporting councils to conduct public engagement efforts, the Rural Secretariat is also available to assist other Provincial Government departments to design and deliver their own public engagement initiatives. The Rural Secretariat also periodically convenes special deliberative dialogue initiatives on themes deemed to be of particular importance to the rural sustainability of this province, often in partnership with rural stakeholder groups and other government departments.

5. Values

The core values explain the character of the organization. These values are paramount to the mandate and activities of the council and are as follows:

Collaboration Each person is committed to working together effectively.

Creativity Each person seeks and supports new ideas and approaches.

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Empowerment | Each person is responsible for participating in discussions, making informed decisions and taking personal responsibility for their contributions. |
| Inclusion | Each person acknowledges others' views and perspectives and has the right/opportunity to express their own. |
| Learning Culture | Each individual is recognized and valued for the skills that they bring and is encouraged to continue to learn. |
| Transparency | Each individual gives and shares open and objective advice based on sound information and principles. |
| Trust | Each person is open and supportive when participating in partnerships and follows through on requests and commitments. |

6. Primary Clients

The primary clients of the Regional Council include the Rural Secretariat, the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat, and departments and agencies within the provincial government, among others.

The council will also engage individuals, groups and organizations within the region as it carries out its work.

7. Vision

The Labrador Regional Council supports the vision of the Rural Secretariat:

Sustainable regions with healthy, educated, prosperous people living in safe, inclusive communities.

The work of the Labrador Regional Council supports the vision of the Rural Secretariat through:

- development of a long-term vision of sustainability for the region;
- identification of priorities that contribute to regional sustainability which consider economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects; and
- enhancing regional input which has been incorporated into the policy development and decision-making processes of the Provincial Government (i.e. the submission of a preliminary discussion document related to energy and transportation issues within the Labrador region).

8. Mission

The mission statement developed in 2007 identified the priority focus area that would guide council's work from 2007-11. It represents the key longer-term result that council has been striving towards as they move forward with their work. The priority focus area supported the strategic directions of the Provincial Government, as identified in the 2008-11 Activity Plan. The Labrador Regional Council has identified and focused on key priorities and developed partnerships while carrying out the necessary work to inform their advice to government.

The mission statement of the council is as follows:

By 2011, the council will have participated in an ongoing community engagement process that will demonstrate the value of two-way communication between the Provincial Government and citizens.

Measure: Participated in an ongoing community engagement process

| Indicators | Accomplishments |
|--|--|
| A long-term vision of sustainability for the region will have been submitted to the Provincial Government and shared with citizens | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The long-term vision for the Labrador Region was completed and submitted to the Minister responsible for the Rural Secretariat in 2007. It is available online at http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/regional_councils/labrador.html or a hard copy can be obtained through the Rural Secretariat. The vision was shared with community through engagement sessions and many of the ideas came from residents during these sessions. |
| Enhanced regional input will have been provided into policy development and decision-making processes of the Provincial Government | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council has informed government topics including the Poverty Reduction Strategy and Healthy Aging by providing feedback on the discussion documents. Two advice documents have been submitted to government; one on the Energy Plan and one on Transportation. (These documents are available upon request.) The Regional Council was formed in 2005 to provide advice to the Provincial Government with the support of the Rural Secretariat. The informed discussions have added to the depth of knowledge held by citizens and supports government in its efforts to improve program and policy planning. Community engagement and the work of the council is reflective of one another as the issues council members have identified correspond with the issues raised through community engagement. Regional input has been enhanced through engagement sessions. Some examples of engagement sessions in Labrador are as follows: |

| Indicators | Accomplishments |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In 2007, community engagement sessions took place in Happy-Valley and Port Hope Simpson, involving more than 50 citizens and 11 organizations; ○ In 2008, engagement sessions were also held in Forteau and Labrador West and were a partnership between the Rural Secretariat and Violence Prevention Labrador; and ○ In 2009, the Rural Secretariat partnered with the Voluntary Non-Profit Secretariat for two engagement sessions. |
| <p>Opportunities and mechanisms will have been provided to enhance two-way communication between the Provincial Government and citizens</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The conference <i>Innovation and Collaboration: Learning and Changing Together</i> created the space for 55 participants, including stakeholders, government and citizens, of the region to set the agenda for future sustainability. Moving forward on the seven identified areas of opportunity will show the government that community supports initiatives in these areas and that both citizens and government can support each other in future programs and services. As a result of the conference a Labrador Food Security Committee was formed and has since conducted research and set up and ran an outdoor market. |
| <p>Community engagement sessions will have been conducted at the regional level</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There were a total of seven community engagement sessions held from 2007 from 2009. The participants included representatives from community groups, government departments, shelters, College of the North Atlantic, and front line health workers from the Nunatsiavut government and the Innu and Metis nations. ● The Rural Secretariat partnered with Labrador Grenfell Health in designing and planning the Labrador Regional Wellness Coalition's Annual General Meeting in 2010. Approximately 25 participants from all across Labrador and the Northern tip of Newfoundland attended. |
| <p>Citizens and stakeholders will have been informed about the economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects of regional sustainability</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sustainability is a key concern for our rural communities. Understanding what it means to be sustainable is an underlying message of the long-term thinking of the regional council. Sustainability is an essential aspect of long-term planning for the region. It is important to take careful consideration of such things as the environment, balanced population, public services and the management of raw resources. ● Asset Mapping Sessions in Happy Valley-Goose Bay and the Straits held in 2008, identified activities that support sustainability and addressed the social, economic, cultural and environmental aspects of the region. This well-rounded process |

| Indicators | Accomplishments |
|------------|---|
| | outlined the local assets and activities that support sustainability and identified partners in the region. |

Discussion of Results: The Labrador Regional Council consulted communities through an asset-based approach to community prioritizing and visioning. The council began its visioning work for the region in 2007 and continued to work on the vision for Labrador with feedback from community until it was considered representative of the region. The vision is a long-term goal of the Rural Secretariat Labrador Region and is used to guide the council as it continues to define priority issues and work with government. Council reviewed the information gained from community engagement sessions and prioritized what they heard.

Over the last three years the council has consulted with community members around the region to learn more about the challenges facing Labrador. Two-way communication with government has increased. The council receives requests for input and it submits advice documents. With this increase in communication the council recognizes the value in being well-educated and informed.

Through a partnership with Memorial University of Newfoundland, the council has been given presentations on the health sector, energy sector and hydro development. The council strives to hear both the community voice and those of experts as they create advice documents for government and shape their future work. Additionally, the council aims to build communication, partnerships and capacity in the region through regular planning and joint community engagement sessions.

9. Report on Performance

In its 2008-11 Activity Plan, the Labrador Regional Council identified two goals. The activities and performance of the council with respect to each of the goals as outlined below, is in support of the Provincial Government’s strategic directions for the Rural Secretariat (Appendix A). In particular, the council’s performance allowed for the development of new partnerships with various stakeholders at the regional level, and provided a new regional forum to discuss citizens’ perspectives on regional and rural sustainability.

9.1 Issue 1: Health

Over the past three years the Labrador Regional Council discussed issues of concern in the region. As we looked at the demographics and listened to community members it became apparent that health is a pressing concern. While other initiatives are in place to improve health status (e.g., the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the Health and Wellness Coalition and Family Violence Prevention), the council reached consensus to support and partner with stakeholders to further strengthen the health of the people in the region.

Key themes emerging from community engagement that informed the council’s perspective included the need for: (i) pilot project for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder; (ii) access to services such as health care

which are very expensive and challenging; (iii) the upfront cost of travel needs to be addressed; (iv) equal access to health services; (v) culturally appropriate services and translators; (iv) effective communication around available programs and services to remote communities; (vi) increased funding for recreation and sports which are important and costly; and (vii) importance of quality of life considerations. This is now being explored through research with a partnership with Memorial University.

Goal: By March 31, 2011, the Labrador Regional Council will have developed and communicated a position paper identifying leadership, communication and partnering opportunities within the health sector in Labrador.

Measure: Position paper developed and communicated.

| Indicators | Accomplishments |
|--|--|
| Community engagement sessions held | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2008, partnering with Violence Prevention Labrador and the Labrador Regional Wellness Coalition the Regional Partnership Planner held discussions in Forteau and Port Hope Simpson on challenges to accessing health care. Roundtable discussion held with community representation and coordinated by the Harris Centre Presents series took place at the Hamilton Hotel in Happy Valley-Goose Bay on May 13, 2008. This session was organized by Memorial University’s Harris Centre and the Labrador Regional Council as part of the Knowledge in Society project, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). The aim of this session was to address several key issues relating to health that have been identified by the Labrador Regional Council in their work to date. While council members were unable to attend due to logistical reasons, the invitation was extended to government and community members actively involved in health care delivery, policy and research. |
| Opportunities identified to enhance leadership, communication and partnership within the health sector | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New partnerships were formed from the outcomes of the conference held in 2009. A Food Security Committee has been set up and is supported by the Regional Planner and the Labrador Regional Wellness Coalition. |

| Indicators | Accomplishments |
|--|--|
| Position paper communicated to relevant stakeholders and the Provincial Government | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This indicator was not met however council continues to work towards the finalization and submission of a position paper on health for the 2011-12 fiscal year. • The research took much longer to complete due to two factors: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. finding a researcher in the field of health research who was able to take on the task and receive ethics approval and 2. data collection in this community-based research project took much longer to complete due to the large geography covered. |

2010-11 Objectives: By March 31, 2011, the Labrador Regional Council will have communicated these opportunities to stakeholders and the Provincial Government.

Measure: Opportunities in the health sector within the Labrador region communicated to stakeholders and government

| Indicators | Accomplishments |
|--|---|
| Research initiated through partnership with Memorial University to investigate accessing health care in Labrador completed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Rural Secretariat identified a lack of knowledge regarding access to health care as an impediment to developing effective policy initiatives around the provision of and access to health care in the region. • In the fall of 2010, a graduate student began the research as a partial requirement of a Masters of Science in Medicine in Applied Health Services Research. |
| Opportunities in the health sector communicated to government | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This indicator was not met due to the lengthy process of community-based research and ethics approval. • However, work continues on this issue and the opportunities identified by the research, Barriers to Accessing Health Care in Labrador, will be presented to government in the form of an advice document from the Labrador Regional Council in the 2011-12 fiscal year. |

| Indicators | Accomplishments |
|---|--|
| Opportunities in the health sector communicated to Stakeholders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This indicator was not met due to the lengthy process of community-based research and ethics approval. • However, work continues on this issue and follow-up with research participants will be held in the 2011-12 fiscal year. The follow-up will include a discussion document created from the research and focus groups held in Happy Valley - Goose Bay and Nain to discuss the results. This discussion will be recorded and submitted along to government as an appendage to the research on Barriers to Accessing Health Care in Labrador. |

Discussion of results: The 2010-11 objective was not met due to two significant factors: finding a researcher in the field of health research who was able to take on the task and receive ethics approval and the data collection for this community-based research took much longer to complete due to the large geography covered.

However, much work has been done in preparation of communicating opportunities related to the health sector to stakeholders and the Provincial Government. The council prioritized the issues they would like to address in the region. Health was seen as the most pressing concern for the communities of Labrador. The council has learned that these concerns are in every area of Labrador and are due in large part to the challenges of accessing care in isolated and remote communities. Equality of access and care is important to the citizens and therefore, a priority of the council. The council's vision for a sustainable future is based on healthy people as well as economic prosperity and cultural diversity

In early 2009, Lisa Densmore, Regional Partnership Planner with the Labrador Rural Secretariat in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, contacted Susan Hunt, Director of Business Development for MITACS at Memorial University to discuss the possibility of partnering with the Faculty of Medicine to undertake a research project to examine barriers of access to health care in Labrador.

The Rural Secretariat identified a lack of knowledge regarding access to health care throughout Labrador as an impediment to developing effective policy initiatives to ensure the many diverse regions in Labrador have equitable access to quality health care.

A research student from Memorial University is currently conducting the research in the region with the intent to analyse the results. As this data becomes available to the regional council, it will be submitted to government with recommendations to support health care accessibility in the region.

9.2 Issue 2: Transportation and Energy

Energy and transportation issues directly relate to the health and well-being of citizens in the Labrador region. Increased availability of power can support industry and with better transportation links business opportunities as well the mobility of the public can be enhanced. Transportation impacts all facets of Labrador's ability to achieve success in the social and economic environment. Improving transportation

links and lowering the cost of travel leads to better access to regional services and supports improved health outcomes. These two areas of concern are very important to the sustainability of the region.

Goal: By March 31, 2011, the Labrador Regional Council will have developed, within the context of existing strategies, a preliminary discussion document related to energy and transportation issues within the Labrador region.

Measure: Discussion document developed

| Indicators | Accomplishments |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Community engagement sessions held | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council did not engage in community engagement sessions around the Energy Plan and energy needs of Labrador. Council felt it was necessary for themselves to be better informed about the Provincial Energy Plan and its implications before engaging community. They engaged Memorial University’s Harris Centre to discuss alternative energy scenarios and created a discussion document on alternatives to the Energy Plan. Memorial University hosted a session with three researchers to explain the energy plan and alternative energy sources to the council. • A transportation forum was organized September 19th and 20th, 2008; by three regional councils (Labrador, St. Anthony- Port Au Choix and Corner Brook-Rocky Harbour) to work together and discuss the transportation issue. The forum was hosted by Memorial University’s Harris Centre. A transportation report is available to the public. • Transportation sessions were held as a part of larger community planning sessions in 2008 during community meeting in Port Hope Simpson, Forteau and Goose Bay. Communities noted the need for hard top to be laid between Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Labrador West and the completion of the road from Happy Valley-Goose Bay to Cartwright junction. The south coast road has been completed but remains unpaved and dangerous during the winter months. • Additionally, hard top is wanted for the road to the straits. • Transportation discussion document submitted May 14, 2010. |

| Indicators | Accomplishments |
|--|--|
| Opportunities identified | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council recognized the need for clean power to replace diesel power on the coast, an adjacency principle for Labrador when Lower Churchill is developed, and more power to be made available for industry in the region. • The concerns for transportation, beyond roads were identified as: (i) a regional airport in the South Coast; (ii) the lengthening of the airstrip in Nain and lights for night time operation. |
| Position paper communicated to relevant stakeholders and the Provincial Government | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An energy discussion document was submitted in April 2010. Concerns brought forward included: reliance on diesel, adjacency benefits, training and jobs as well as the environment. • The discussion document was not shared beyond the council. It was presented as a series of questions and government responded to these questions directly to the council. • Transportation discussion document submitted May 14, 2010. |

2010-11 Objectives: By March 31, 2010, the Labrador Regional Council will have identified regional opportunities and challenges related to transportation.

Measure: Regional opportunities and challenges will have been identified.

| Indicator | Accomplishments 2010-11 |
|--|--|
| A preliminary discussion document relating to transportation opportunities and challenges in Labrador will be developed and submitted to government. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation discussion document submitted May 14, 2010. Some solutions brought forward were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create a regulatory agency to ensure quality of service and scheduling that works ○ A fixed link would allow more control over access to the mainland and lesson ○ Hard top for all parts of the Trans-Labrador Highway. ○ Costing for a road to the north coast. ○ Larger runway and lights for Nain. ○ Isolated post allowance should be increased to encourage people to live and work in smaller centers. ○ Increased subsidized travel for low income people to receive health care and other services |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tax credits for families in isolated areas who pay high cost of food and electricity |
|--|--|

Discussion of results: Transportation in Labrador impacts all aspects of service delivery. The challenges of air, road, marine and rail have real impacts on the quality of life to the people in the region. Other areas of the province can share services, centralize schools and offer more in the way of sports and recreation by virtue of location. Most of Labrador cannot share services, drive between communities or even find a shelter in time of crisis. The discussion document submitted by the council intends to put these issues on the forefront of policy planning and future infrastructure planning.

There needs to be equitable access for education, training, health care and government services. Communication infrastructure and hard surfacing of the roads would go a long way to improving the quality of life for Labrador. New communication and transportation infrastructure may become affordable with the hydroelectric development. Transportation sessions were held as a part of larger community planning sessions. Communities cited the need for hard top road to be put down between Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Labrador West, and the road to the straits. The completion of the road from Happy Valley-Goose Bay to Cartwright was also a priority.

10. Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

As the nature of the work of the Council is broad-based and long-term in nature, the challenges and opportunities faced by the Council remain fairly similar from year to year. The council feels that these challenges and opportunities can be categorized along three themes.

Provision of policy advice to government

Council’s mandate commits it to reaching consensus on the priorities for change in its region and to identifying policies and programs to encourage desired change. The challenge for council, given the range of issues, perspectives, interests and needs within its region, is to reach consensus on priorities for change and on policy advice to provide to government. The opportunity for council is to position itself as an objective, informed and influential advisory body within the region that can both provide informed bottom-up policy advice to government as well as respond to top-down policy level requests from government that may impact on the region.

Regional collaboration

Council’s mandate commits it to sharing information, advancing regional cooperation and to encouraging regional partners to more actively participate on matters that can advance regional sustainability. The challenge for council is to position itself as an objective, informed and influential advisory body within the region that can advance collaboration. There are two opportunities for council. First, it can position itself as a broad-based and cross-sectoral advisory body that can lead,

participate and/or support regional collaboration across a range of sectors, communities and interests. Second, as a broad-based advisory body, it can identify the various supports necessary to foster collaboration and provide advice to government to advance efforts to provide such supports.

Regional communications

Council understands that a range of non-governmental organizations in rural areas provide advice to government on a range of policy matters. In large part, these organizations are focused on particular agendas, needs and interests, such as and among others, regional economic development, environmental awareness and protection, social policy advancement and municipal governance. The challenge for council is to clearly and effectively communicate its mandate and role to other regional stakeholders and interests, and to position itself as an objective, informed and influential advisory body that can assist other stakeholders. The opportunity for council, through new and strengthened relationships with regional stakeholders, is to ensure that a broad range of perspectives are considered as it identifies regional priorities, provides advice to government and fosters collaboration.

Appendix A: Strategic Directions

Strategic Directions

Strategic directions are the articulation of desired physical, social or economic outcomes and normally require action by more than one Government entity. These directions are generally communicated by Government through platform documents, Throne and Budget Speeches, policy documents, and other communiqués. The *Transparency and Accountability Act* requires departments and public bodies to take into account these strategic directions in the preparation of their performance-based plans. This action will facilitate the integration of planning practices across Government and will ensure that all entities are moving forward on key commitments.

The directions related to the Rural Secretariat are as follows:

1. Title: Regional Partnership Development

Outcome Statement: Stronger and more dynamic regions.

Clarifying Statement: This outcome requires systemic intervention by the Regional Council in the areas of:

- Partnership Development
 - Within regions
 - Between government and regions
- Forum for informed discussion and priority identification that links economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects of regional sustainability.

2. Title: Assessment of Policy on Regional Sustainability

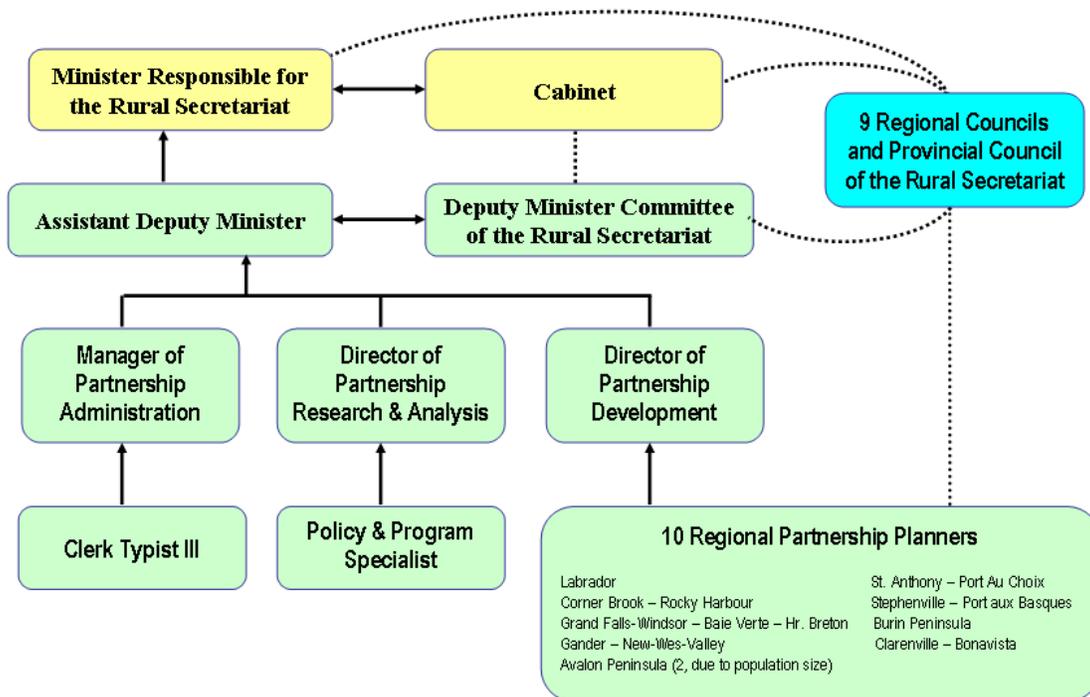
Outcome Statement: Improved Government understanding of and response to significant and long-term regional issues.

Clarifying Statement: This outcome requires systemic intervention by the Regional Council in the areas of:

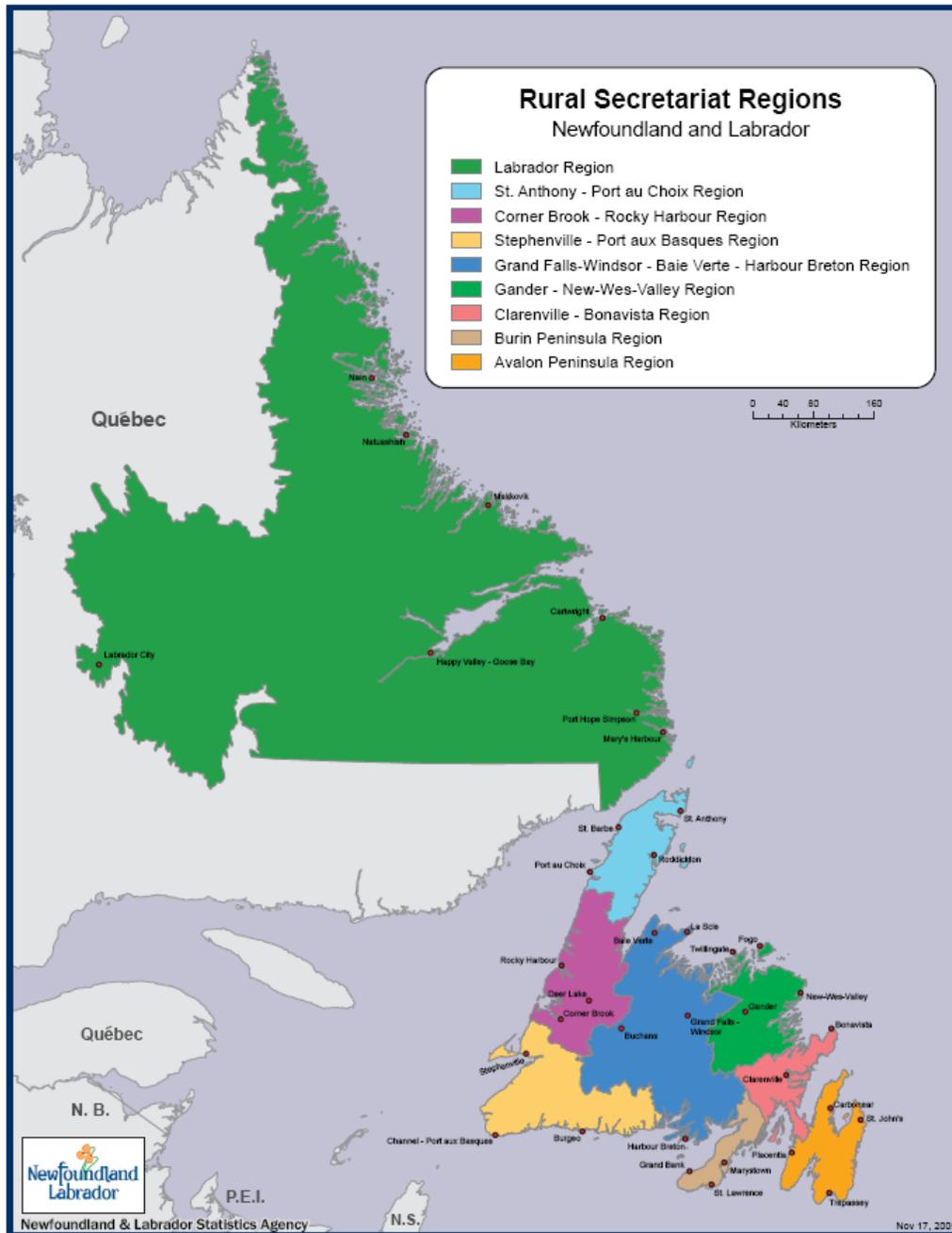
- Regional perspectives which can inform the development and implementation of public policy

Appendix B: Organizational Structure

Rural Secretariat Structure



Appendix C: Map of Rural Secretariat Regions



Appendix D: Mandate of Rural Secretariat and Provincial Council

Mandate of the Rural Secretariat

The Rural Secretariat's mandate is to:

- Promote the well-being of all regions of Newfoundland and Labrador through a comprehensive and coordinated approach to economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects of regional development.
- Act as the focal point for government to work with local and regional partners to build strong and dynamic regions and communities.
- Ensure that regional concerns are considered throughout the provincial government and promoted at the federal level.
- Carry out research and analysis of economic and social issues affecting all regions of Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Help communities and regions identify and take advantage of growth opportunities.

Mandate of the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat

The Provincial Council's mandate is to:

- Develop a common, evidence-based understanding of the social, economic, environmental and cultural realities facing the province.
- Review key provincial economic and social measures (e.g. education levels, demographic trends, health status, income levels, EI usage, economic diversity) and to reach agreement on the priorities for change over the next five years.
- To identify and advise the provincial government on policies and programs which either advance, negatively impact or need to be developed to encourage the necessary change.
- Advance cooperation through the sharing of information on and discussion about economic and social measures, and to encourage government and community partners to take action on and be accountable for those areas within their mandates.
- Serve as an external sounding board for government for the development of strategies, policies, programs and budget issues that will affect provincial and regional sustainability.

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Photo Courtesy of Rural Secretariat



Rural Secretariat

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